Wood & Water

Step Aboard & Sail Into History

The Journal of the Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust at Hunter's Yard - Issue 8 Winter 2026

Two of our three Rebels sailing with the Matthew Project

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The next edition of Wood & Water will be published at the end of June

All weblinks and emails shown are interactive. Just click.

We welcome comments on our content and design, and would love to hear about your sailing adventures, with Hunter's or further afield. Email us at: editor@huntersyard.com

We encourage you to pass Wood & Water on to anyone that you think might enjoy it, by sending them this link. Thank you. http://eepurl.com/g0u53f

Welcome
from the Editor

Warmer days will be with us again soon - Gentle warm breezes to fill your sails

Welcome to this first edition of 2026.

Wood & Water will now be published three times a year, at the end of February, June and October.

It's always a pleasure, preparing the Trust's publication as it provides an opportunity each time to be reminded of just how lucky we are to be involved with keeping the Hunter Fleet of fantastic boats on the water.

The 'Hunter Experience' is ready to change young people's lives, give established sailors their 'fix' of classic boat sailing and, through our RYA courses for new and developing helmsmen, increased confidence and skill.

We are at the heart of glorious Broadland and will continue to bring you articles reflecting on Broads history, heritage crafts, people of the Broads and how our fleet survives.

Particular focus is given to our engagement with young people, our flagship scheme, Project Starfish, (supported by The National Lottery) and the excellent evaluation of our work.

Our lead features are about two things that represent life in Norfolk and can hardly be missed if you spend any time here; The art of David Dane which reveals so much of the emotion felt about the Broads, and Flint, 'the stone that built Norfolk'

Unsung heroes

Neil is our cleaner and handyman, and keeps us in order. Many of you will have met him on your holidays as, along with Ian, he is usually first into the yard. Jan helps with getting boats ready for new holiday makers on a Saturday and also kindly volunteers with maintenance jobs around the yard. Between them, they virtually repainted the outside of the sheds last year, repairing woodwork and generally sprucing the place up.

It takes quite a team to keep the Trust running, the Yard working and everything operating so that many people can continue to enjoy sailing Hunter's Fleet of traditional boats.

Skippers, Boatbuilders, Cleaners, Office staff, Friends, Volunteers and Trust Directors, all working to fulfil the Trust's core objective; education and training and the preservation, conservation and maintenance of our unique, historic fleet of traditional Broads sailing craft, the boatsheds in which they were built and the associated heritage craft skills

Artist & Broadsman
David Dane

From boatyard hand to renowned artist, we look at the life and work of this adopted 'Son' of Norfolk

'Early Spring, Hassingham Broad'

In 1966, I sat in a school minibus on the way to Buckenham Ferry for my first sailing lesson. As we got close, I saw a huge ship moving slowly and majestically through the vast reed beds towards Norwich.

It was a coaster headed for the turning basin on the corner of the river Wensum, near Thorpe Station, delivering timber to one of the riverside merchants. This was the start of some glorious times as a teenager on the Broads, sailing Bitterns, Norfolk Punts, Javelins, Ospreys, Rebels and Reedlings, Yeoman, Wayfarers, Slipstreams and my own Enterprise and Snipe.

WORDS: Whimsical of Womack

Why tell you this? Well, along the way, I was lucky enough to sail in the very cold weather at the start of a season, skippering a Lullaby-class four-berth yacht from Hunter's Yard in Ludham. It was cold enough that the ropes were frosted in the mornings, after a night so cosy in our sleeping bags in the cabin with gimballed paraffin lamps. We started sailing as it got light, with low sun, the frosted reeds crackling in the wind, the sky tinged with purple and pink; something truly special that must be experienced to be appreciated. A magical time of day.

Years later, I saw an oil painting that perfectly portrayed this winter image of the Broads and someone else looking at it said 'that's not very realistic; the colours are all wrong.' I corrected them promptly! This was my introduction to David Dane's work, an artist who manages to capture the romance, the history and the true 'feeling' of the Broads.

In the summer of 2025, I finally met David at his Broadland home near Ludham.

He won't mind me saying that he seems an old soul in the best possible way, with soft white hair and a full white beard that make him look quietly wise, as if time has gently brushed past rather than rushed him. His face is lined, but kindly so, the sort of lines that come from a lifetime of smiling, listening and thinking rather than worry. There's a mischievous warmth there; patient, attentive, and quietly amused, as though he's genuinely pleased you're in front of him.

My memories there are nothing but fond and I remember looking out of the window at the ice-coloured reeds.

Being near him feels calm. He gives off the sense of someone who doesn't need to hurry anymore, the sort of man you'd enjoy standing beside in his bird-filled garden, saying very little and feeling perfectly at ease.

For more than four decades, David has stood as one of Norfolk's most distinctive and evocative artists. Known primarily for his atmospheric oil paintings of the Norfolk Broads, David has built a career that marries a profound sense of place with an unmistakable personal style. His paintings, prints, and exhibitions have reached audiences far beyond East Anglia, yet they remain deeply connected with the quiet waterways, reed beds, and vast skies of his home landscape.

David's journey into the world of art began at an unusually young age. Born outside Norfolk, he moved to the county when he was just five years old. This relocation that would have a lifelong influence on his artistic vision.

Growing up near the Broads, he was immersed in an environment defined by water, wind, and light. The wetlands, with their seasonal changes and shifting skies, offered an endless source of inspiration.

While his early education did not revolve exclusively around art, David's interest in drawing and painting was evident. In his formative years, he experimented with different media and styles, but it was oil painting, particularly landscape painting, that captured his imagination. By the time he reached his twenties, David was exhibiting locally in the Norwich area. These early 1970s exhibitions introduced viewers to bold, atmospheric compositions that distilled the essence of the Broads into light, shadow, and mood, evolving into his highly distinctive hallmark through the 1980s.

David's reputation expanded beyond Norfolk in the 1980s and 1990s. His paintings began to appear in national and international art print catalogues, most notably through the London-based publisher Rosenstiel's, which distributed his work worldwide. One of his most famous pieces from this era, 'Romantic Mill', became a bestselling print, introducing his work to a broad audience far outside the UK.

Alongside this print success, David continued producing original paintings, many of which sold quickly on exhibition. Collectors were drawn not only to the beauty of his work but to its sense of place. Owning a David Dane painting is, in a sense, owning a piece of the Norfolk Broads itself. His shows are often sell-out events, with originals snapped up within hours of opening. Limited-edition prints allow others to take home a piece of the exhibition. His work is also frequently displayed in regional galleries and appears in private collections across the UK and internationally.

David's artistic bond with Norfolk's Broads was ignited during his formative years working at Hunter's Yard in Ludham. This traditional boat yard, home of the renowned Hunter Fleet of traditional classic wooden Broads yachts, nestled in the heart of the Broads, became a wellspring of inspiration for the artist. As he reminisces:

"I first started painting working with the famous Hunter Fleet at Ludham, one of the most traditional yards on the Norfolk Broads. My memories there are nothing but fond and I remember looking out of the window at the ice-coloured reeds.

It looked like heaven to me. I also skippered trip boats for around five or six years. I had an immediate rapport with the area and thought how lucky I am to be doing this. This fired my imagination and was inspiration for my paintings."

Hunter's Yard, now operated by the Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust, is an iconic location off Womack Water in Ludham. Established in 1932 by Percy Hunter and his sons, it has preserved the heritage of traditional wooden boat building and maintenance, maintaining the look and feel of a bygone era. Its historic sheds and workshops continue to service classic Broads yachts and invite visitors into a living time capsule of Norfolk craftsmanship.

Working at Hunter's Yard meant David was surrounded by the textures, tones, and moods of the marshlands each day. The "ice-coloured reeds" visible from his workspace weren't just scenery, they became emotional touchpoints in his later works. His ability to translate the interplay of light, water, and mood into evocative paintings traces back directly to those early days beside the dyke. Then, as now, his art offers not only a portrait of a place, but an emotional memory shaped in the quiet grey glow of Norfolk's own "heaven."

By also skippering boat trips, guiding small passenger boats on tours of the waterways for

Right: 'Eric Edwards at How Hill'
Eric (MBE) was a marshman, working for more than 40 years at How Hill

five or six years, David experienced the Broads in motion, from shifting light to subtle water currents.

That early, visceral impression, from reeds to river, boat shed to water, stayed with him. The environment at Hunter's Yard didn't just inspire one or two paintings; it laid the foundation for decades of evocative landscapes.

One distinctive aspect of David's career is his commitment to documenting his own work. Over the years, he has personally catalogued his paintings, resulting in an extensive archive of more than 100 images. This online catalogue is searchable by location, season, and exhibition, making it a valuable resource for collectors, researchers, and devotees. It also reinforces the importance of the Norfolk Broads as a continuous source of inspiration.

David's career stands as an example of how a regional artist can achieve both local and international recognition while remaining faithful to a specific place. His work is not about chasing trends or reinventing his style for novelty's sake; rather, it is about deepening a lifelong engagement with a subject that continues to inspire him.

In doing so, he has become not just an interpreter of the Norfolk Broads but also one of its cultural ambassadors. His paintings capture the timeless beauty of the region, but they also record its present-day reality, an important function in an era when landscapes

and ecosystems face constant change.

David Dane's artistic journey remains inseparable from the Norfolk Broads. From his early days at Hunter's Yard to his status as a celebrated and bestselling artist, he has stayed faithful to portraying the light, mood, and spirit of this unique landscape.

His work has become more than beautiful decoration, it serves as both cultural ambassadorship and living documentation of a place facing constant environmental change.

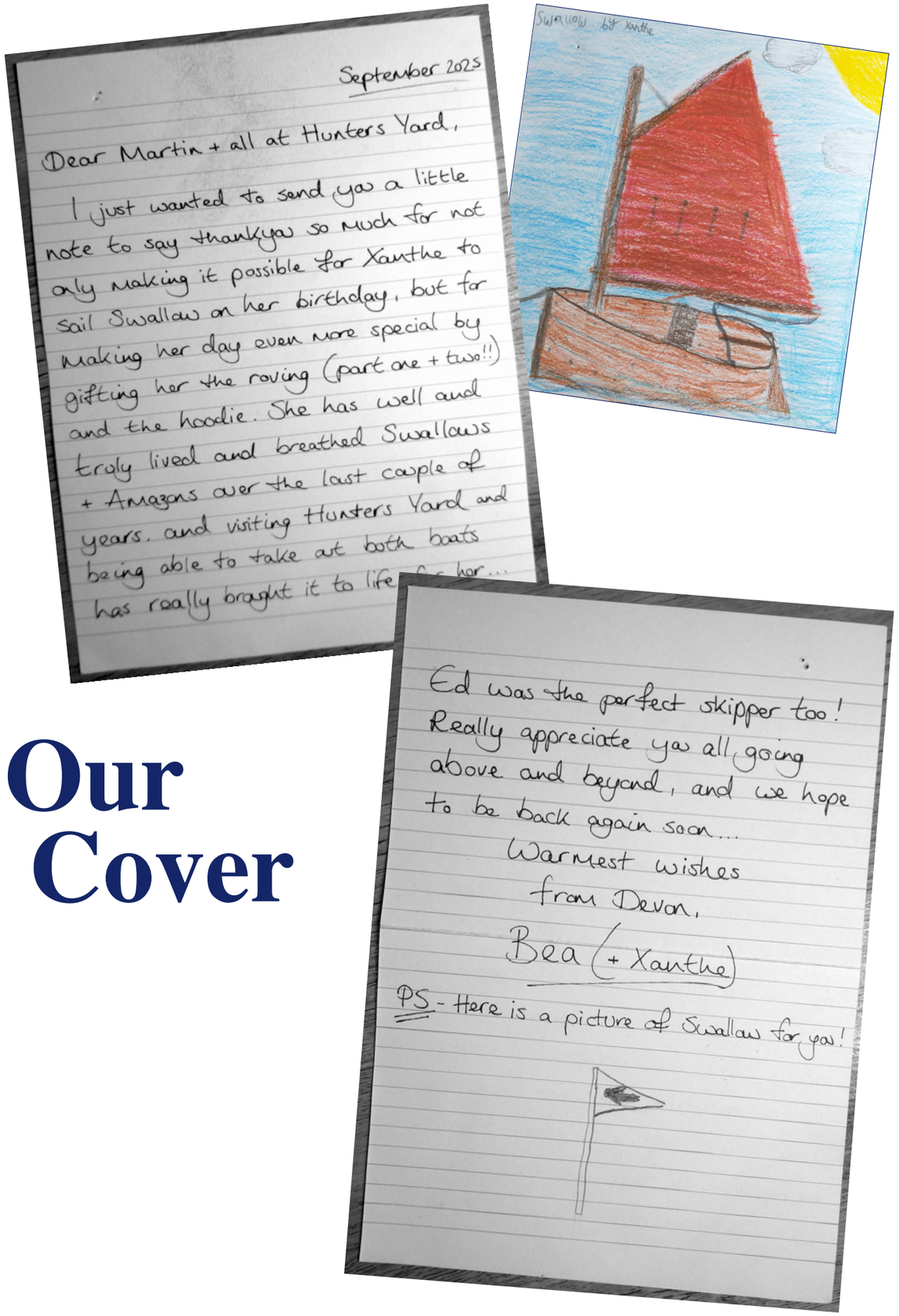
By combining technical skill, atmospheric depth, and profound personal connection to place, David has created a body of work that is both regionally distinctive and universally appealing, a legacy that ensures his place among Britain's most cherished landscape artists.

Top: 'Norfolk Wherry'
Left: 'Preparing for a sail'

David Dane Art: daviddaneart.co.uk

Images: © David Dane - All rights reserved

Our Cover


September 2025
Dear Martin + all at Hunters Yard,
I just wanted to send you a little note to say thankyou so much for not only making it possible for Xanthe to sail Swallow on her birthday, but for making her day even more special by gifting her the roving (part one + two!!) and the hoodie. She has well and truly lived and breathed Swallows + Amazons over the last couple of years, and visiting Hunters Yard and being able to take out both boats has really brought it to life for her...
Swallow by Xanthe
Ed was the perfect skipper too! Really appreciate you all going above and beyond, and we hope to be back again soon...
Warmest wishes
from Devon,
Bea (+ Xanthe)
PS - Here is a picture of Swallow for you!

Hunter's Yard
'Magic' Roundabout

How the Yard maintains the glorious 'old' boats of the fleet

Well, for all the decades that the sheds have stood, the yearly 'roundabout' has turned again as all the boats 'rest' and the yearly 'magic' takes place, transforming our wonderful fleet from not entirely pristine (for that read a bit knocked about by the stresses and strains of sailing old boats) into glossy yachts ready for next season.

It is easy to forget that all but one of the yachts are not that far away from being 100 years old!

Unlike a privately owned boat, often sailed at weekends for some of the year, these are hired out for six months a year, and have sometimes even been sunk or holed while always suffering the routine wear and tear of a demanding working life on the water.

No apologies for the Magic Roundabout reference by the way.

For those that can remember the delights of Ermintrude, Florence, Mr. Rusty, Dougal, Brian, Dylan, Mr. McHenry and Zebedee, the show ended nearly 50 years ago!

Our wonderfully skilled team of 'magicians' in the yard under the guidance of foreman Ian Grapes (forty years service and counting) has been sanding, filling, removing, repairing and varnishing (everything in sight including: hatches, drawers, booms, crutches, masts and quants) and, in time, everything will go back in its allotted place (named for each individual boat) and the massive operation to launch everything will start. By the time of the next Journal at the end of June, all the boats will have been out since around the end of March and working for a living.

One of the half-deckers, our Yare and Bure One Design or White Boat, Buff Tip, needs a lot of woodwork and the deck lino is in a very poor state. A long way to go but it will look wonderful when it's all done. In the meantime, another YBOD, Tortoiseshell, will take its place in the fleet, thanks to the kind donation reported later in this issue.

Work carried out this winter includes:

- New forward deck planks for Lustre, topped with ply to be painted, rather than recovered with Lino.
- Transom names repainted and varnished
- Hulls sanded and varnished
- Spars varnished
- Repairs made to rotten seams
- Blocks cleaned and varnished

Working on Wood Violet, Ezra removed some rotten seam wood and glued in splines on either side to create a new seam at the top and a complete section of new wood below. That new section was then routed out to create a seam to match the existing look. Then, the first coat of varnish.

As usual, there is great deal of work ahead getting to the launch date and the Yard Team will be working around the tides that meander into and sometimes through the sheds, keeping warm with tea drinking and a deal of physical work.

We are installing electric engines in Lullaby, Hustler 5 and Wood Sorrel over the winter. Lullaby will have a Torqeedo engine but the other two boats will have ePropulsion motors fitted by Landamores.

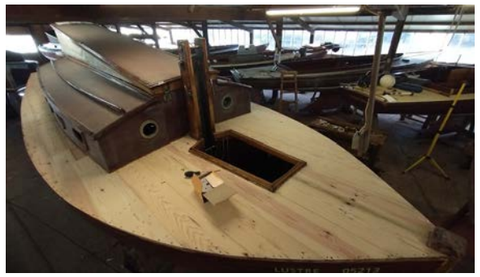
If these are successful, we'll switch to ePropulsion as standard for the remaining boats and as older engines need replacing.

The decision to install engines in all cabin yachts is necessitated by economics. Boats without engines attract only around 30% of the hires of those with engines.

Lustre's deck lino needed replacing as did some of the deck planks. Without a suitable Lino product of an acceptable quality being available, a decision has been made to use an epoxy paint product on the deck instead.

Applied in several layers, together with a compound to make it non-slip, it is expected to significantly outlast the lino and be easier to maintain. The paint has already been in use for some while on a cabin top.

Another aspect is that replacing lino is a fairly major task to remove the old material and prepare the surface and then requiring many hands to handle the new lino, manoeuvre it into place and stick it down, so much time-saving will result.



Are you searching for an unforgettable sailing experience that blends nostalgia with adventure? If so, hiring a classic Broads yacht from Hunter's Yard in Ludham, Norfolk, could be the perfect escape.

Step into a bygone era - Sailing on a beautifully rpeserved yacht from the 1930s, where every curve and polished wooden finish tells a story of a simpler time. The elegance and charm of these classic vessels transport you back to an era when life moved more slowly and every moment was savoured. These aren't just boats; they're time machines, connecting you o the rich history and traditions of sailing on the enchanting Norfolk Broads.

Your unforgettable sailing experience

An Exceptional Sailing Experience - Sailing a classic boat isn't about rushing to a destination; it's about the journey itself. These stunning vessels deliver a thrill modern boats often can't match. Feel the breeze fill the sails as you glide effortlessly across the water, accompanied by birdsong and the gentle lap of the Broads. Whether you're an experienced sailor or a curious beginner, the joy of mastering these yachts is truly unmatched. Few things rival the satisfaction of harnessing the wind and steering through such picturesque waterways.

Embrace Waterborne Camping - Like the idea of camping but want something a little more magical? Waterborne camping offers a unique twist. Wake up surrounded by natural beauty, with the soft movement of water as your alarm. These classic boats feature cozy sleeping quarters and all the essentials for a comfortable stay. Spend your days exploring scenic landscapes and charming villages, then relax on deck in the evening beneath a canopy of stars.

Create Unforgettable Memories - Hiring a Broads yacht from Hunter's Yard is more than a holiday - it's a chance to make lasting memories with family and friends. Whether you're celebrating a special occasion or escaping the daily grind, time on the water brings people together. From laughter-filled days of exploration to peaceful sunsets and quiet conversations, these moments become treasured memories.

Explore the Wonders of the Broads - The Norfolk Broads are a natural jewel, with tranquil waterways winding through lush landscapes and storybook villages. Your classic yacht gives you the freedom to explore at your own pace. Visit welcoming pubs, browse local markets, or drop anchor for a waterside picnic. Every stop reveals more of the Broads' unique beauty and character.

Expertise and Support - At Hunter's Yard, you're not just hiring a yacht - you're joining a community of passionate sailors. The friendly, knowledgeable team is always on hand to help, offering route suggestions, practical advice, and reassurance for first-time sailors, ensuring your journey is smooth and enjoyable.

Conclusion - ***If you're looking for a truly distinctive getaway that blends adventure, relaxation, and timeless charm, hiring a classic Broads yacht from Hunter's Yard in Ludham, Norfolk, is the answer.***

With skippered sailing, sailing experiences, boat rental, and courses of all kinds, connect with nature, slow down, and rediscover the joy of sailing.

Who knows about ‘hogs’?

What began as a relatively small repair quickly turned into something much bigger!

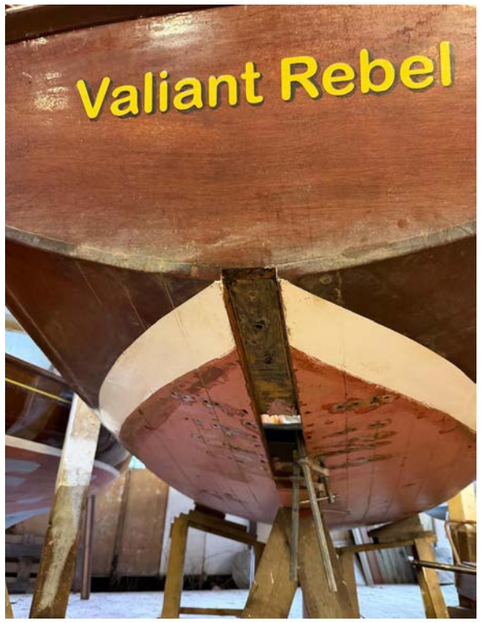
Poor old Valiant Rebel! This is a slightly technical story, but bear with us, it’s a great example of the kind of careful, skilled woodworking the yard carries out on its own boats every winter, and a big part of why our fleet is so widely admired.

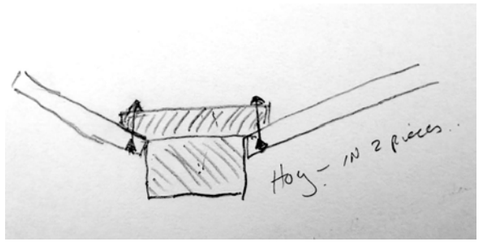
At first, we believed that the graving piece set into the hog, think of it as a backbone or spine which the rudder tube passes through, was the only part that needed replacing.

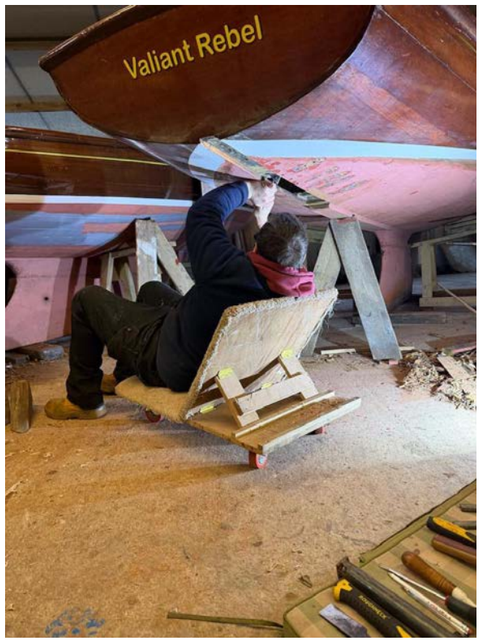
As is often the case with wooden boats, further investigation revealed that the rot extended much further forward and aft than expected. As a result, a long section of the hog had to be replaced. The hog is a major structural timber that runs lengthwise above the keel and plays a crucial role in the strength of the boat. On Valiant Rebel, as with many (though not all) boats, the hog is made from two separate pieces (see the diagram). Boatbuilding terminology in this area varies widely between builders, and also between the UK and the US.

This two-part construction is actually very helpful when it comes to maintenance. If you look closely at the photo of Valiant Rebel’s internal layout, you can see how it works. You’ll also notice that the ribs, original to the boat, had to be cut back to allow access for the repair. These will also need to be carefully repaired. Much of the work involves Ezra squeezing into the aft under-deck area, which is about as uncomfortable as it sounds!

If you have a boat in need of attention, do get in touch to see how we can help. Our boatbuilders are available during the summer, provided we’re not called away for emergency fleet work. Last year, we completed major renovations on a customer’s Rebel, as well as on Swallow, a 12-foot clinker-built dinghy.







Partnership with Easton College

We have been working with Easton College’s Outdoor Leadership Course over the last year or so welcoming their students into the yard, ensuring they can use us as a sail training base and showing them how a working yard which serves holiday-makers works. This gives them some insights as they prepare to go out to work in the outdoor leisure industry. It also gives us a pipeline of young, qualified, skippers to help out in the Trust’s youth sailing - they provide great role models for other young people! Given that the average age of the team at the yard is quite high, having more young people around brings a welcome boost of energy!

Boat donated to Easton College

This shows students from the Easton College Outdoor Leadership course with course leaders Adam (standing left) and Rich (standing right) who are doing their keelboat qualifications at Hunter’s Yard. They are standing in front of a Dutch half-decker kindly donated, via the Trust, to Easton College. The boat will be kept and sailed from Hunter’s Yard and maintained by the students. It is one of only two such courses in the country and a really valuable vocational course. As with many similar educational institutions, funds are very tight, and donations like this make all the difference in getting young people out on the water.

Buff Tip replaced by Tortoiseshell for 2026

Buff Tip, the Trust’s Yare and Bure One Design, also known as a White Boat, will be out of the water for extensive renovation during 2026.

Serendipity struck shortly after we made this decision and the owners of Tortoiseshell, also a Yare and Bure One Design, offered to donate it to the Trust. This hugely kind gesture means that we can continue to have a White Boat in the fleet while Buff Tip is worked on.

A team from Easton College will be taking the lead on renovating Buff Tip, under supervision from the Hunter’s team, as part of their Outdoor Leadership course.

Working with Acle Academy

We have been taking children from Acle Academy sailing on the cabin boats during the last few years. This is supported by the Ranworth Trust. Our next project with them involves housing an 18’ clinker half-decker at the yard that needs extensive renovation. Youngsters from the Academy will work on it under the supervision of volunteers and the Hunter’s boatbuilding team.

Our Big Picture - Young people afloat, gaining skills & confidence, learning teamwork

Project Starfish is an initiative from the Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust that aims to broaden access to sailing and maritime heritage experiences for young people, especially those from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

What Project Starfish Is All About
Project Starfish is giving young people the chance to get out on the water, try something new, and connect with the amazing maritime heritage of the Norfolk Broads - all while having a seriously good time. Here's what it offers:

- Day sailing experiences - hands-on sailing trips on beautiful heritage wooden boats based at Hunter's Yard in the heart of the Broads.
- Onshore heritage activities - exploring the local maritime history that the Trust helps to protect and bring to life.
- RYA sailing courses - proper, accredited sailing training that builds real skills, confidence, and independence on the water.
- Residential sailing programmes - longer adventures that combine sailing, teamwork, and life skills in a fun, community setting.

The Aim - at its heart, Project Starfish is about creating opportunities for young people to:

- Get out there and experience sailing
- Connect with local heritage and discover the Broads' story
- Enjoy the wellbeing boost that comes from being outdoors, active, and part of a team
- The focus is especially on reaching those who might not usually have access to this kind of experience - opening the door to sailing, heritage, and new possibilities.

Recently, the Trust received an independent evaluation for the National Lottery Heritage Fund, and we're over the moon to share the key findings from this project. There's quite a lot to read, but it's worth it!

This brilliant evaluation highlights just how far the Trust has come — thanks to the amazing work of the Hunter's Yard team, our dedicated skippers, and especially Ela Keegan, our School, Youth, and Community Coordinator, who's been at the heart of it all.

You can download the full report at;
www.nhftrust.org.uk

Evaluation - Executive Summary

Between 2024 and 2025, Project Starfish has significantly expanded access to heritage sailing and maritime learning for children and young people across Norfolk. Delivered by the Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust (NHFT) and supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the project set out to connect participants with the heritage of the Broads through practical, fully funded sailing experiences.

The project successfully reached schools and youth organisations from areas of social and economic disadvantage, with teachers reporting that between 35–45% of participants were eligible for pupil premium funding. Over the two-year period, more than 1,000 children and young people took part. Evaluation evidence demonstrates strong outcomes across learning, confidence, and wellbeing. Participants showed high engagement, curiosity, and recall, while teachers and youth leaders highlighted the inclusivity, professionalism, and enthusiasm of NHFT staff. The introduction of new elements in 2025, including pupil logbooks, information about further sailing opportunities, a visual story, and introductory Royal Yachting Association qualifications, further enhanced learning impact and sustainability.

The project has strengthened NHFT's partnerships with schools, youth groups, and funders, increased its regional profile, and generated advocacy materials to support future fundraising. It has also built internal capacity, by developing the whole team at the Yard and clarifying the essential role of the Schools, Youth and Community Project Coordinator in sustaining this work.

Project Starfish has exceeded its quantitative targets and achieved clear qualitative impact. It provides a replicable model for heritage-based engagement that combines cultural learning, wellbeing, and environmental connection, leaving a strong foundation for continued delivery beyond the current funding period.

Evaluation - Key achievements (a summary)

1. Access to Heritage
Over 1,000 children and young people have taken part in funded sailing experiences at Hunter's Yard.

2. Awareness of Traditional Skills
Participants developed a basic understanding of traditional sailing and boatbuilding through hands-on experiences and interpretation by skippers and staff.

3. Inclusivity and Impact
The project effectively reached children and young people from diverse and disadvantaged backgrounds, targeting schools with above-average pupil premium rates.

4. Community Relationships
The project has established strong relationships with schools and youth organisations, many of which expressed a wish to return.

5. Funding, Sustainability and Resilience
NHFT strengthened its profile with local funders, securing support beyond the original National Lottery Heritage Fund grant. NHFT staff and Trustees are particularly skilled in cultivating relationships with funders.

THE MATTHEW PROJECT

Finding hope together

The Matthew Project is a Norwich-based charity that supports young people tackling challenges around mental health, drugs, and alcohol.

We've been partnering with them for a couple of years now, but in 2025 things really levelled up - thanks to funding from the Big Oardeal Sports and Opportunities Fund through the Norfolk Community Grant.

"This grant has made an incredible difference to our young people. They're more confident, more involved each session, and they genuinely value this chance they wouldn't otherwise have had"

We kicked things off with two relaxed, two-hour sailing tasters to give everyone a chance to try sailing in a low-pressure, supportive environment.

From there, three young people decided to take things further, joining a 5-day RYA Level 1 & 2 keelboat course delivered over a month at the yard.

Altogether, 14 people got involved - ten young people joined the taster sails, and three stayed on for the full RYA course. Four Matthew Project staff and volunteers came along in support, with two of them even completing their RYA Level 1 training! Having staff learn alongside the young people helps make sailing an even bigger part of what they can offer in future.

While only a few completed the full course, the real success was the personal growth that came out of it. Some arrived understandably nervous or quiet, but by the end, they were chatting, crewing confidently, and really enjoying being part of the group. One participant summed it up perfectly:

"I wasn't planning on actually doing the training, but I guess that shows I can try new things even if I'm not sure about them. It's helped my confidence and communication a lot - it's peaceful here, and everyone's really nice"

Our instructors, Ezra and Guy, adapted brilliantly - using flexible teaching methods, even whiteboards for non-verbal communication when needed. Instead of rushing through both Levels 1 and 2, the focus was on building confidence and making sure each person felt proud of what they achieved.

The change was amazing to see. As one project worker shared:

"This grant has made an incredible difference to our young people. They're more confident, more involved each session, and they genuinely value this chance they wouldn't otherwise have had."

Two of the young sailors are already keen to keep going — and we're looking at ways to support them with Level 2 qualifications, instructor shadowing, and even potential routes into community sailing or future jobs.

It's been such a powerful project to be part of - showing just how much sailing can boost confidence, wellbeing, and life skills when young people are given the chance to get involved.

"I wasn't planning on actually doing the training, but I guess that shows I can try new things even if I'm not sure about them. It's helped my confidence and communication a lot - it's peaceful here, and everyone's really nice"

Small Gifts. Big Waves
Hunter's Yard has changed lives since 1968.

As a charity, the Trust depends entirely on donations, legacy gifts, grants, and fleet hire income. Every contribution drives its mission forward.

When Norfolk County Council began running the yard in 1968 for Norfolk schoolchildren, it embodied the then Director of Education's belief: "The purpose of education is to turn 'I cannot' into 'I can.'" Some skipper instructors sailing with school parties today learnt to sail then - proof of that vision's lasting value.

The NHFT was founded on a powerful principle: education happens beyond classrooms. Through sailing and practical skills, young people gain self-confidence, independence, and joy on the water that stays with them for life.

For nearly 30 years, the Trust has quietly transformed young lives. For many, it's been their first time away from home, their first challenge overcome, their first real belief that they CAN succeed.

Youth groups have long received generous discounts, allowing schools, scouts, guides, and community groups to access this life-changing experience. But rising costs and growing demand mean goodwill alone isn't enough. A sustainable bursary fund is now essential.

This is where supporters play a vital role. The Trust secures the future Hunter's Yard so young people from all backgrounds can benefit. At its heart is a dedicated bursary fund - turning discounts into reliable, long-term support.

Hunter's Happy Hundred - 100 people giving £10 monthly. That's it.

These small gifts create a reliable fund helping young people who need it most take part, belong, and grow in confidence. For less than many spend on coffee or streaming monthly, you can change young lives. No prizes. No gimmicks. Just impact.

Your £10 each month keeps Hunter's Yard open and ready for the next generation. **Leave a Lasting Legacy** - Regular gifts sustain us today. Legacy gifts secure tomorrow.

A gift in your will - any size - protects Hunter's Yard for years to come, maintaining boats, facilities, and bursaries so young people can discover what they're capable of. Many supporters find comfort knowing their values live on through lives they help shape.

Small Gifts. Big Waves - Hunter's Yard has changed lives since 1968.

With your support - monthly, one-off, or legacy - it can continue for decades.

Every Gift Matters - By joining Hunter's Happy Hundred or remembering the Trust in your will, you help future generations step aboard with confidence and say, "I can".

HELP US BUILD A BURSARY

100 HUNTER'S HAPPY HUNDRED

'The purpose of education is to turn 'I cannot' into 'I can.''

– Dr. (Sir) Lincoln Ralphs, Director of Education, Norfolk (1960s)

For generations, Hunter's Yard has helped young people discover confidence, teamwork, and the joy of sailing the Norfolk Broads

For over 50 years, youth groups have received a 30% discount — but now, we need your help to turn that 'bursary' into a real fund that can keep this tradition afloat.

We're looking for

100 friends to give £10 a month

Together, we'll build a bursary that lets even more young people get afloat, learn life skills, and carry on a legacy that began in 1968.

No prizes. No gimmicks. Just the knowledge that you're helping the next generation say,

'I can.'

JOIN THE HUNTER'S HAPPY HUNDRED

SMALL GIFTS, BIG WAVES

Please email hh100@nhftrust.org.uk to find out more

Knapping, Galleting and the architecture of Norfolk

From prehistoric hand axes to medieval churches, flint has shaped Norfolk's landscape for hundreds of thousands of years..

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From prehistoric hand axes to the patterned faces of parish churches, flint has shaped Norfolk's landscape for hundreds of thousands of years.

In this feature, we explore how a humble stone became a defining local craft - and where to see its finest expressions today. Sadly, however, it is an officially endangered heritage craft, with perhaps fewer than 50 professionals in the field.

A stone that tells Norfolk's story

Flint is one of those materials that can seem unassuming at first glance. Dull, rounded nodules scattered across fields or built into church walls rarely demand attention from afar. Step closer, however, and flint reveals a story that reaches back hundreds of thousands of years, linking prehistoric toolmakers with medieval masons and modern conservationists. Nowhere in Britain does this story read more clearly than in Norfolk, where flint is not merely a building material but a defining feature of the landscape itself.

Look anywhere in Norfolk and you will see flint-built churches rising from the land - quiet witnesses to a craft rooted in deep time. Next door, you might see a brand-new property wearing a coat of flint. It is a timeless building material, as relevant today as it was many hundreds of years ago.

From cutting tools to building blocks

At its heart, flint knapping is a simple but exacting action: striking flint in a controlled way so that it fractures predictably. This skill lies at the very beginning of human technology. Flint is almost pure silica, chemically similar to glass, and when struck correctly it breaks with razor-sharp edges. Prehistoric people exploited this property to make hand axes, scrapers, knives and spearheads, tools on which survival itself depended.

The Happisburgh Hand Axe. © Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service

Norfolk sits at the centre of Britain's earliest human story. Along the county's Deep History Coast at Happisburgh, archaeologists uncovered a flint hand axe dating back around 500,000 years, alongside evidence of some of the earliest humans to walk in northern Europe. At Lynford, in the Brecks, black flint tools found among mammoth bones show that people were living and hunting here around 60,000 years ago. These discoveries place flint at the heart of innovation and adaptation over immense stretches of time.

Grimes Graves

St. Michael Coslany, Norwich

The scale of flint working expanded dramatically in the Neolithic period. Around 4,500 years ago, people were mining flint deep underground at Grime's Graves near Thetford. More than 400 pits were sunk into the chalk, some reaching nearly 20 metres below the surface, creating one of Europe's earliest industrial landscapes. Despite its name, there are no burials here; 'graves' derives from an old word meaning pits. The flint extracted was of exceptional quality and traded widely across the region.

Why flint became a building material

Long before it became decorative, flint was practical. In much of eastern England, good building stone is scarce. Chalk is too soft for exposed masonry, while harder stone had to be brought in at great cost. Flint, by contrast, lay everywhere: embedded in chalk beds, scattered across ploughed fields, or smoothed by the sea along the north Norfolk coast at places such as Wells-next-the-Sea, Sheringham and Cromer.

Early walls used flint much as it came, set in lime mortar alongside brick or stone rubble. These structures are robust but visually rough. Over time, builders discovered that by striking flint nodules to remove their outer skin, they could expose a flat, glossy face. This process, known as knapping (from the Dutch or German krappen, meaning 'to crack'), transformed flint from awkward rubble into a material capable of refinement and pattern.

Where to see flint at its finest

Norwich offers some of the county's most impressive examples. St. Michael at Coslany is frequently singled out for its exuberant flushwork, with decorative panels, tracery and bands combining knapped flint and pale stone to striking effect. It demonstrates just how expressive the technique could be in skilled hands.

Civic architecture also embraces flint. Around the Norwich Guildhall and neighbouring historic buildings, flint is used to articulate façades, emphasise windows and doorways, and add texture and contrast to large wall surfaces. Here, flint speaks of municipal pride as much as religious devotion.

Further west, King's Lynn presents another rich concentration. As a medieval port, the town invested in impressive churches and public buildings, many of which feature chequered patterns and finely knapped flint facings — a reminder that flint architecture belonged to an urban as well as a rural tradition.

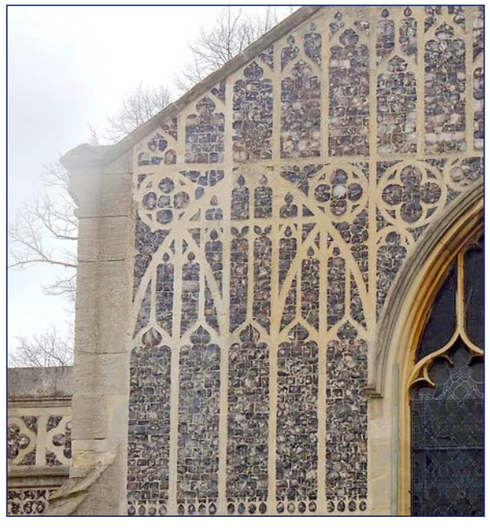
Beyond towns and main roads, Norfolk's lanes lead to countless smaller churches where flint rewards slow looking. Modest flushwork panels, simple chequer patterns and occasional heraldic shields appear unexpectedly on village churches, often dating from the 14th and 15th centuries. Together, they form a dispersed yet remarkably coherent body of work across the county.

You do not have to look very far from Hunter's Yard to find wonderful examples of flint in use. Ludham's own Methodist chapel dates from 1867 and is a fine example of fully dressed flint blocks with barely a gap between them. It's only fair to mention the magnificent St. Catherine's just down the road, built in the

14th and 15th centuries and one of the largest in the area

Knapped flint and the art of flushwork

Knapped flint has a distinctive look. The fractured face is typically black or dark grey, sometimes almost glassy, catching the light in a way raw flint does not. Set carefully into a wall, these flat faces create a smooth, deliberate surface that pairs beautifully with dressed stone, brick or clunch, the hard chalk limestone used locally.



The most celebrated expression of this pairing is flushwork, a technique that flourished in East Anglia during the later Middle Ages, particularly in the 14th and 15th centuries. In flushwork, knapped flint and pale stone are laid flush with one another to create patterns, panels and intricate tracery. Dark flint becomes a background against which pale stone outlines windows, shields, inscriptions and decorative motifs. Flushwork was never a structural necessity. It was a statement of confidence, wealth and local pride. Churches, guildhalls and grand parish buildings used flushwork to impress, signalling both skilled craftsmanship and civic ambition. Today, it remains one of the most distinctive architectural features of Norfolk and the wider East Anglian region.

Galleting

Galleting involves inserting small flint chips into mortar joints for both structural integrity and decoration, commonly seen in East Anglian churches.

A county shaped by geology

Norfolk's intimate relationship with flint is also geological. Different parts of the county produce flint with subtly different characteristics: brown field flints around Fakenham; deep black flints near Thetford and Swaffham; chalky grey flints north of North Walsham; pale grey stones around Holt; and rounded beach flints along the coast. Medieval builders worked with what lay beneath their feet, and attentive visitors can still read these variations in church walls and boundary fences.

The county's medieval prosperity, fuelled by agriculture, wool and trade, helped fund an ambitious programme of church building and rebuilding. Norfolk's famous round-tower churches, many constructed from flint rubble, sit alongside larger parish churches and civic buildings that showcase more elaborate knapped work.

Looking closely — and conserving carefully

To appreciate flint architecture fully, it pays to slow down. The craft lies not only in the struck faces of the flints, but in how they meet, how they are bedded in mortar, and how stone and flint join around windows and doors. Traditionally, lime mortar allowed walls to breathe and flex gently with changes in temperature and moisture.

Modern conservation practice has returned to these principles. Hard cement mortars, widely used in the 20th century, can trap moisture and cause flint and stone to crack or spall. Today, specialist Norfolk masons once again practise traditional knapping and lime re-pointing, ensuring repairs behave like the historic fabric they replace.

For those keen to learn more, heritage organisations and local craftspeople sometimes offer demonstrations of flint knapping. Watching a nodule split cleanly under a well-judged blow is a vivid reminder that this is a skill rooted in deep time, passed from hand to hand across millennia.

A living Norfolk tradition

Flint knapping in architecture represents a remarkable continuity. The same material behaviour that made flint ideal for prehistoric tools later shaped the visual language of medieval buildings. In Norfolk, where geology supplied the stone and tradition supplied the skill, flint became a regional signature: a black-and-white language written across churches, guildhalls, boundary walls and village streets.

To walk through Norfolk with an eye for flint is to read a story spanning half a million years. It is written not in words but in struck stone, lime mortar and patient craftsmanship, an indelible part of the county's history, and one that still quietly shapes its sense of place today.

St. Catherine's, Ludham

Support the Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust while you shop

As a charity, the Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust relies on a mix of fleet hire, grants, donations, legacies and everyday support from people who care about what happens here. While some supporters prefer to give directly, others are looking for quieter, more practical ways to help — ways that fit easily into daily life.

Easyfundraising offers exactly that.

By starting your online shopping through Easyfundraising, the retailers you already use donate a small percentage of what you spend to the Trust. You pay the same prices, shop in the same way, and nothing is added to your bill. **The donation comes from the retailer, not from you.**

It is a straightforward arrangement that suits supporters who want to help regularly without making repeated donation decisions. Over time, these small contributions add up, helping to support our education programmes, boat maintenance and opportunities for young people to experience sailing and maritime heritage.

> *"I've just used easyfundraising for the first time with confused.com, to renew my car insurance and the Norfolk Heritage Fleet trust got a £19 donation - for nought on my part"*
>
> *Whimsical of Womack - 6th February 2026*

There is no catch, no obligation, and no change to your shopping habits — just a quiet way to support work you already value.

Small actions, taken often, can make a real difference.

How it works

1. Start your shop through Easyfundraising
Visit the Easyfundraising website or use the optional browser reminder before shopping online.

2. Shop as normal
Browse, purchase, and pay exactly as you usually would. Prices and offers stay the same.

3. Retailers donate to the Trust
Once your purchase is complete, the retailer makes a donation to support the Trust's work.

A simple way to help keep Hunter's Yard, the fleet, and our education work afloat —
without changing how or where you shop or spending a penny more.

Scan to find out more or get started:
easyfundraising.org.uk
Search for:
Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust

Definitely not the Norfolk Broads

Rather a long way from home, our Schools, Youth and Community co-ordinator, Ela is off in the Caribbean.

We would like to think that she's lounging around in the British Virgin Islands, taking in the sights and sounds, but while she's there she is helping out with the Kalinago Canoe Project (formerly the Carib Canoe Project)

The next issue of Wood and Water will carry a full article about her time there, her experiences and the project.

In the meanwhile, you can find out more at the sites below.

https://aragornsstudio.com/CaribCanoeProj.htm

https://www.avirtualdominica.com/project/gligli/

Image credit:Clay Mills

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